



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

architectural structures dedicated to the services of religion. In the variety, if not the number of such monuments here found, the Boyne is without a rival in any Irish river, nor do we think it could be paralleled by any river in the empire; and we might truly add, that it is on its luxuriant banks, amid so many instructive memorials of past ages, that the history of our country, as traced in its monuments would be best studied.

It is from amongst these interesting remains that we have selected the subject of our prefixed illustration—the Church and Round Tower of Donaghmore, situated a little more than a mile from Navan, on the road to Slane.

This religious establishment, which was anciently called *Domnach-mor muighe Echnach*, owes its origin to St Patrick, as will appear from the following passage translated from the life of the Irish apostle, attributed to St Evin:—

“While the man of God was baptising the people called Luaigni, at a place where the church of Domnach-mor in the plain of Echnach stands at this day, he called to him his disciple Cassanus, and committed to him the care of the church recently erected there, preadmonishing him, and with prophetic mouth predicting that he might expect that to be the place of his resurrection; and that the church committed to his care would always remain diminutive in size and structure, but great and celebrated in honour and veneration. The event has proved this prophecy to be a true one, for St Cassanus’s relics are there to be seen in the highest veneration among the people, remarkable for great miracles, so that scarcely any of the visitors go away without recovering health, or receiving other gifts of grace sought for.”—Tr. Th. p. 130.

But though the existing ruins of the Church of Donaghmore sufficiently indicate it to have been a structure “diminutive in size,” its architectural features clearly prove that it is not the original church of St Patrick’s erection, but a re-edification of the thirteenth century, in the usual style of the parish churches erected by the Anglo-Norman settlers within the Pale. Neither can the Round Tower, though unquestionably a structure of much higher antiquity than the present church, be referred to the time of the Irish apostle, or perhaps to an earlier age than the ninth or tenth century. At all events, its erection cannot be ascribed to an earlier date than that of the Tower of the Church of Kells—a religious establishment founded by St Columbkille in the sixth century—as these towers so perfectly agree in architectural style and masonwork, that they appear to have been constructed by the same architects or builders.

This very beautiful tower is built entirely of limestone undressed, except around the doorway and other apertures, and is of admirable masonry. It has two projecting ledges or steps at its base, and six rests for stories, with intermediate projecting stones or brackets in its interior. These stories are each, as usual, lighted by a single aperture, with the exception of the upper one, which has two openings, one facing the east, and the other the west; and the apertures present all the architectural varieties of form observable in our most ancient churches. The circumference of this tower, near its base, is 66 feet 6 inches, and its height, to the slant of the roof, which is wanting, is about 100 feet. The wall is 3 feet 9 inches in thickness, and the doorway is 12 feet from the ground. This doorway—which is of very beautiful execution, and, as usual, faces the west end of the church—is 5 feet 2 inches in height, and has inclined sides, and a semicircularly arched top. It is 2 feet 3 inches wide at bottom, and 2 feet beneath the spring of the arch at top. Over the door there is a figure of the Saviour sculptured in relief, partly on the key-stone and partly on the stone over it; and on each side of the architrave there is a human head also in relief, as on the doorway of the church of Kells.

Some antiquaries, in their zeal to support the theory of the Pagan origin and the antiquity of the Round Towers, have asserted that this doorway is not the original one, but an “after work.” But there is not the slightest ground for such a supposition, and this sculpture, as a profoundly skilled architectural antiquary, the late Sir Richard Colt Hoare, well observed, furnishes “a decided proof that these buildings were not (as some writers have conjectured) built by the Pagans.”

A similar argument against the application of the Round Towers to the purposes of a belfry, has been grounded on the circumstance of the western front of the church having three apertures for bells above its gable. But it should not be forgotten that this structure has no claim to an earlier date than

the thirteenth century, when a variety of bells, and a different mode of hanging them, were brought into use by the Anglo-Norman settlers.

The Church of Donaghmore has been confounded by Archdall and subsequent writers with the ancient church of Donagh-Tortain, also founded by St Patrick, but which was situated near Ardbraccan. P.

THE DRUNKARDS,

A TOO TRUE STORY.

IN one of those admirable tales which Mrs Hall is now publishing with the praiseworthy object of the melioration of the Irish character, the ordinary effects of a too faint resistance to the fascinations of strong drink are faithfully detailed. The moral which our generous countrywoman intended to convey is undoubtedly of universal application, but I am afraid that the circumstances I am about to relate will convey no moral. It is the simple and true record of an appalling calamity which befell the subjects of my story, with all the melancholy unaccountableness and fatality of lunacy. No one would warn his fellow-creatures against the danger of madness—against any unforeseen dispensation of God’s wrath: it is in this sense, then, that I am afraid I have no moral to convey in narrating an event of which I was all but a spectator.

It must have struck every observer of human character that there are two classes of drunkards in this country. One class is composed of those persons, who, at first being well enough disposed to be temperate in all things, are insensibly led on by the charm of good fellowship to create for themselves an artificial want, which in the end leaves them the helpless victims of a miserable disease: they begin with a little—they continue the draught under the self-deceiving sophism “it’s only a drop”—they fall into excess—they lose all sense of decorum and proper spirit—they become mean and unbashful in their craving after spirituous liquor, which condition unfits them for an upright and honourable course of thought and action in any of the details of daily existence—a mental dissipation accompanies the bodily languor: while the hand trembles, the brain wanders, and the last scene of the tragedy is delirium tremens.

But there is another class of drunkards—God forbid that I should attribute any thing to the decrees of Providence inconsistent with mercy and justice—but I am almost tempted to designate this class the drunkards by necessity. However worldly condition, education, or other causes, may modify the result in individual cases, it is not the less certain that there are persons—very many of them—who appear to have come into the world predisposed to an inordinate desire for intoxicating liquors. These wretched people do not begin with thimblefuls, and end with gills—the stroke seizes them like a thief in the night—sometimes in the prime of manhood—sometimes in the flush of youth—sometimes (it is a fearful truth) in the thoughtlessness of boyhood. It is a passion with them—a madness. You may know one of these unhappy beings, especially if he be a very young man, by the sullen and dogged air with which, early in the morning, he enters the public house, and sits down in solitude and silence to his double-shotted measure of undiluted whisky—whisky is the only drink for one of this calibre—alas! the worst and fiercest stuff that can be made is the most acceptable to him—his palate is too long palled to distinguish between tastes and flavours—it is the *liquid fire* he wants; you may know him at other times by the pitiable imbecility which prompts him in his awful craving to reach his tumbler to his lips with both his hands, till he finishes the draught with all the apparent eagerness of intense thirst; you may know such a one by his frightful sleeps, begun, continued, and closed in terrific dreams! The wife and family of the progressive or occasional drunkard are wretched enough, as every body knows; but, oh! who can possibly estimate the amount of misery which the wife and children of a madman like this are destined to endure.

I have not overdrawn the picture in the abstract—take an individual instance:—

In the spring of 18— I was living, on a visit with a friend, in the neighbourhood of a small country town in one of the most fertile and prosperous districts of the island. The population was almost entirely free from that abject and squalid poverty which is the lot of the Irish peasantry beyond that of all other descriptions of civilized people. I remarked particularly of this neighbourhood that it had a larger proportion of respectable farmers and of that species of country gentle-

men called *squireens*, than any other part of the country I had ever lived in. To this latter class belonged the heads of two branches of the same family, both of whom resided in the immediate vicinity of my friend's house. Their names were Peter and James Kavanagh. Peter was by many years the elder of the two; his family consisted of three grown-up sons and one daughter. Peter had married in early life, and his wife died in giving birth to a fifth child, which did not long survive its mother. James had a large family of young children. Peter's only daughter, Alice, had been brought up in her uncle's house in order that she might receive the education and care which a girl of her tender age, without a mother, might expect from the kindness of her nearest female relative.

The family of Peter Kavanagh, then, consisted of himself, his three sons, and a single in-door servant as housekeeper, who was already an old woman and of indolent habits. The household of a widower in the middle and humbler ranks of life is rarely ordered with regularity and decorum, and Peter's was no exception to the general case. Every room had an aspect of untidiness and discomfort. Seldom were the boards of the floors or staircase washed or swept—seldom were the window panes cleaned, or the hearth-flag whitened, or the tables rubbed, or the chairs dusted. Things soiled were never cleaned—things broken were never mended—things lost were never replaced. Each of the family felt in turn the inconvenience of this state of things, but one threw the blame upon the other, and nothing was done to remedy the evil. Every one thought it strange that such a good practical farmer and shrewd man-of-the-world as Peter Kavanagh should care so little about the comforts or conveniences of every-day existence—but so it was.

Peter, however, had or thought he had one especial household virtue to be proud of. Very early in life he had narrowly escaped disgrace and ruin by severing himself from a parcel of dissipated associates, who had led him step by step into all the labyrinths of premature debauchery. He receded before it was quite too late, and the recollection of what he suffered (for he *did* suffer) was sufficient to make him resolve that his sons should never be tempted in a similar manner. The eldest of these, Richard, was now one-and-twenty, the second, Matthew, nineteen, and the youngest, Gerald, fifteen years of age, at the time I lived near P—, and they had never yet partaken of any spirituous liquor at their father's table. That father, however, was by no means so abstemious as he had compelled his boys to be. Every day since they had first learned the taste of whisky toddy had they been tantalised with the sight of the "materials" for their father's favourite beverage. Peter Kavanagh was indeed a temperate man, but he was not a generous man. He was not one of those kind parents who cannot bear to gratify their appetite with any delicacy, whether much or little, dear or cheap, while their children are looking on with wistful eyes and watering mouths in vain expectancy. He had his reward. One day the two eldest lads, Dick and Matt, were carried home from a neighbouring fair, stupidly drunk. It was the first time they had ever been so, and the quantity they had taken was perhaps trifling; but the father was thenceforward more watchful than ever to prevent them from repeating the excess. In his usual manner to his sons Peter Kavanagh was not particularly harsh, but the least evasion of his strict commands in respect of drink was sure to be visited with great severity. How wretchedly inconsistent was this man's practice! Other misdemeanours of infinitely a greater degree of moral crime were winked at, nay encouraged, by him. The young men were not naturally vicious; but when they found that they could with impunity curse and swear in their father's hearing—when they found that even some of the graver offences against society could be committed without their father's reprehension, was it any wonder that they should soon grow ripe in wickedness? Matt and Dick, in their personal appearance, showed every token of the accomplished village scamp—battered hats jauntily carried on one side of the head—rusty shooting coats of bottle green, with an amazing plurality of pockets—knee-breeches of once-white corduroy insufficiently buttoned over coarse worsted stockings, and heavy brogues with nails like the rivets of a steam-boiler. These were the hardest betters of the ball-alley, the keenest lads at the roulette-table—the deadliest shots at a mark over all the country side. Plenty of money had they, and who dared to ask them how they came by it? Their father had lots of cash lying by, and selfish as he was, and knowing as he was, many a heavy

handful of hard silver was he relieved of by his dutiful sons. Hence the dashing "bit of blood" which carried Dick and Matt alternately over the stubbles—hence the couple of spaniels and the leash of greyhounds, which had the reputation of being the best noses or the fleetest feet in the county—hence the double-barrelled "Rigby" belonging to Dick, which was the admiration and envy of his acquaintances. As they grew up, and cared less for the anger of their father, vicious habits became more settled-looking and systematic with them. They drank to frightful excess whenever they had the slightest opportunity. No one ever saw them for twenty minutes at a time without having full proof that they were slaves to as odious and disgusting a tyranny as ever the depraved tastes of human creatures created for mankind—I mean, no one ever saw them for so long a time without a tobacco pipe between their teeth, and surrounded by every one of the usual nastinesses which accompany the practice when carried to a hateful extent; and yet, even as they were, the county could not boast of two manlier looking fellows than Richard and Matt Kavanagh when dressed for Sunday mass, which they still attended with a punctuality which would be more praiseworthy if it sprang from anything but a motive of vanity and pride. Under different culture they might have become excellent members of society. They had still some faint pretensions to generosity and spirit, and many a pretty girl of the neighbourhood would have trusted to her sole powers of persuasion for their reclamation.

Gerald Kavanagh, the youth of fifteen, was a lad of different stamp. He was open-featured and open-hearted both. He was never seen with a pipe in his mouth, or a tattered "racing calendar" sticking out of his pocket; and while his brothers were out upon their sporting expeditions, or amusing themselves in a less innocent way, it was poor Gerald's pleasure to scamper across the fields to his uncle James's garden, and walk, or talk, or read, or play with his pretty little sister Alley, or romp with his pretty little cousins Bill and Bess, and Peter and Dick, after school hours—the time he knew he would find most company looking out for him. Alley and he were as fond as they could be of each other, and not the less so because they did not live entirely together. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," is as true a line as ever was penned, whether we apply it to the lover and his mistress, or the brother and his distant sister. Many of us, with sighs and tears, can testify this. It was a lovely sight to see that affectionate boy and his fond sister sauntering along the borheens in the wild-strawberry season, with their arms around each other's necks in the intervals of their fruit-finding, until they bade each other good-bye for another day, and returned, "with lingering steps and slow," to homes, alas, how different!

Such were these three youths when Peter Kavanagh, after a short illness, died, and left his property, such as it was, to be equally divided between his children.

I may venture to say that Richard and Matt were not sorry for their father's loss. On the night of the grand "wake" they collected all the idle and profligate young men of their acquaintance together at the house, and dreadful was the depth of drunkenness to which they sank, as might be expected. Every more prudent person present saw how it was—saw that the previous restraint was about to be amply atoned for, and many a shake of the head was intended to be prophetic of coming calamity.

On that same night—early in the night too—little Alley perceived that all was not right with her brother Gerald. She had seen Richard plying him with liquor, which he at first refused, but afterwards accepted—stealthily, however, and with an abashed and crimsoning face as he met the first reproachful glance of Alice. Gradually the temptation worked, and again and again the draught was repeated with less hesitation at the request of his brothers, who seemed happy in the idea of making their innocent companion as guilty as themselves. The devil surely has those in his clutches who find comfort and consolation in the visible abandonment of the fair and innocent to the miserable pleasures for which they have sold their own souls. At length she was frightened to perceive that Gerald had grown hardy and boastful of his feat—he had asked for more whisky, and had been given it by Dick, who, half drunk himself already, was determined to make Gerald drunk for once in his life. The boy was now in the condition wished for by his brother; he had slunk behind Matt's chair; Alice could see his head hanging upon one shoulder, while his eyes were closing in the stupor of intoxi-

cation—he was about to fall to the ground. Quietly she stole to his side, and leaning her head upon his shoulder she whispered,

“Gerald, darling, I didn’t think you would drink so much—why did you do it?”

“Don’t tell uncle James, Alley, if he hasn’t seen me this way, and I’ll never drink so much again.”

“Hold up your head for another bucket, you dog,” said Matt, with sundry drunken hiccupings, as he heard the boy speaking behind his chair, and proffering at the same time a fresh bumper. “Come, Gerald, my boy, it will do you no harm—sorrow’s dry, they say, and Lord knows but you’ve blubbered enough all day for a little fellow.”

“Matt, dear Matt, don’t ask him,” said Alice.

Matt, however, was not to be thwarted: with a brutal cuff he struck his little sister to the ground, and tried to force the liquor upon Gerald’s acceptance. In the attempt the glass fell from his hand, and Alice rose and drew her brother softly from the room.

The funeral took place, and there was another carouse more disgraceful than the first, and another, and another! until the week was out. When Gerald’s uncle saw how completely besotted his nephews had become, he took Gerald to live with him, but not until it had become too painfully evident that the boy had acquired a liking for the liquor which had turned his two brothers into human beasts. Poor little Alice wept over the change. There was no more reading, or playing, or wandering through the country together. He sat sulky and silent in the house all day, more like a poor relation on charitable allowance than the joint-heir of the largest farm in the parish. But this was to have an end!

A month had passed away since the death of Peter Kavanagh, and the zeal of the eldest heirs had by this time drunk up his entire stock of “mountain dew,” when in some out-of-the-way nook or other they discovered five gallons of malt whisky, which perhaps had lain there forgotten for twenty years. It was on a Saturday morning this was found, and one of the Kavanaghs was heard to swear that he would never quit it till the last drop was drained. It was to be the last bout before they set off for Australia, whether they intended to emigrate that very spring, having, with their uncle’s consent on behalf of the two younger orphans, converted their land into money for the purpose. One or two choice spirits had been invited to join them, but these begged to be excused—even these were appalled at the dreadful excesses of their boon companions. Towards evening Gerald had been missing from his uncle’s house. James Kavanagh guessed how it was, and with little Alice in his hand repaired to the brothers’ dwelling. The door was locked on the inside, and on asking for Gerald he was told that he was all safe there, with the saucy addition that “there wasn’t any admission for any d—teetotaller.” Shocked and grieved, James Kavanagh went away with his dejected niece.

The next day was Easter Sunday. The festival had occurred that year unusually late in the spring, and there was already a foretaste of summer in the air. A lovely noon it was when James Kavanagh, his wife, Alice, and the children, walked out in Sunday trim to the parish chapel. The sky was fretted with light silver clouds—the fields were already green with the new growth of the grass—the hawthorn bushes were almost visibly bursting their buds—the whin braes were in a blaze of golden beauty—the birds, especially the red-breast, were chirping away with intense glee, being, in the glorious language of the poet Shelley,

“Many a voice of one delight!”

They continued to walk on, and now the bells of the neighbouring church struck out their Easter jubilee with such exquisite sweetness as we might fancy arrested the sceptical purpose of the despairing Faust in Goethe’s surpassing drama, when the heart-touched metaphysician exclaimed,

“Oh, those deep sounds—those voices, rich and heavenly—Proud bells! and do your peals already ring To greet the joyous dawn of Easter morn?”

And ye, rejoicing choristers! already Flow forth your solemn song of consolation— That song, which once from angels’ lips resounding Around the midnight of the grave, was heard—

The pledge and proof of a new covenant.”

Yes! indeed, those bells almost distinctly said to the heart as they swung in the soft air of that delicious noon, “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast!”

They passed the church—groups of joyous children were playing in the graveyard—five or six immense cheenuts towered, coeval and almost coequal with the ancient steeple, and in these there was a rookery, now in full din—the voices of the children and the cawing of the rooks, disturbed by the sudden peal of the bells, mingled with the chime without discord to the ear. Alice’s eyes glistened for a moment when she recognised her youthful playmates; but she suddenly felt she could not laugh with them—her heart was heavy. At length they stood before the door of the brothers’ house. No signs of wakefulness had it yet exhibited.

“Let us go in, uncle, and tell them to get up,” said the little Alice.

“Let them sleep it out, the scoundrels!” was the indignant reply of James Kavanagh.

They passed on to the place of worship.

In about an hour and a half from this time the same group were on their way homewards, with hearts elevated by the imposing service which they had just been witnessing. A gloom was, notwithstanding, perceptible upon the face of James Kavanagh and of his little niece, as they walked along in company with their happy and smiling neighbours. None of the three sons of Peter Kavanagh had ever before been known to have absented himself from Sunday mass, and their absence on that most holy day was of course a subject of much wonder.

“I could not have thought it possible,” said James Kavanagh gravely, “that they could become so wicked all at once—God forgive them! God help them!”

“Oh, uncle!” cried Alice, as they came in view of the house of guilt once more, “they are not up yet! See, the shutters are still closed!”

They were now in front of the house. “Dear uncle,” said Alice entreatingly, “go into them—do, dear uncle, bring out poor Gerald to eat his Easter dinner with us.”

A thought struck James—he knocked loudly at the door. There was no answer. Another loud knock, and a long pause; and still no sound within the house.

Alice’s little heart echoed the last unsuccessful knock—it almost said, “Wake, Gerald, with the knocking.”

She could endure the suspense no longer, and, running to the gripe at the road-side, she took up a heavy stone, with which she battered the panels of the hall-door as long as her strength permitted her. When she was obliged to desist, her screams might be heard afar off, and still there was no sound in the house.

James Kavanagh had dispatched one of his little boys to a neighbouring cottage for a crow-bar. The boy quickly returned with one, and James, assisted by the crowd who gathered near, was not long in forcing the door.

“Good people,” said he to the anxious company outside, “don’t come in till I tell you—there’s no use in further exposing the shame of my brother’s house.”

He and Alice, with one or two particular friends, entered the hall with faltering steps, and they closed the door behind them.

The first object which met their eyes was Peggy, the old housekeeper, lying on the mat at the foot of the staircase, in a trance of intoxication: she had evidently fallen down stairs in her attempt to reach the door, and had been for hours perhaps insensible. Alice jumped over her, and darted up stairs with the speed of lightning. James and his companions, after a vain attempt at arousing the housekeeper, slowly followed her.

They entered the room which fronted them on the landing. The thick stench of tobacco-smoke, mingled with the fumes of ale and whisky, almost overpowered them. The room would have been quite dark had it not been for the flickering remnants of two candles, which still glared in the heated sockets of a large old-fashioned branch candlestick. James went to the window, opened the shutters, and let down the sash. The glorious sunshine streamed into the reeking apartment, with the blessed air of the Sabbath. How strange—how painful was the paling glimmer of those expiring candles in that holy light! The three young men were lying on the floor at some distance from each other, around the legs of a crazy table in the centre of the room. On the table were huddled together the fragments of salt herrings, the parings of cheese, broken glasses, half-emptied decanters, and the other usual paraphernalia of a low debauch. The whole meaning of the scene was taken in at a glance by James Kavanagh, as soon as he had opened the window. He stooped over one of the

prostrate forms—it was that of Richard. He turned up the face—great God! it was the face of a livid corpse! A smothered groan burst from James: he rushed towards the next—Matt Kavanagh was dead also, quite dead and stiff! James and his friends looked at each other solemnly, and without speaking a word. They turned their glance simultaneously to the place where Gerald was lying. They moved or rather tottered to the spot. There he lay, with Alice in a swoon beside him, his eyes glazed, the skin of his face tightened over his nose and cheek-bones, his lips covered with viscid froth, and his beautiful brown hair tossed backwards from his damp forehead, glistening in a streak of sunshine which came full upon it from the window. “He is alive still!” they all three exclaimed: “he may yet be saved!”

One of them ran to the window and made a sign to the neighbours to come in. The room was soon full of horrified spectators.

They parted Alice from her dying brother, and both were brought out into the open air as quickly as possible.

Amidst the cries and lamentations of the bystanders Alice recovered. She sat for a while on the grass, trying to recall her scattered senses. The sight of Gerald lying near her, as the crowd opened to admit the air to his face with a freer freshness, brought the whole terrible truth to her mind. She rose with difficulty, but, gathering strength with recollection, she succeeded in breaking from the woman who had her in charge, and in a moment the head of Gerald was pillowed upon her bosom.

The soft cooling breeze had restored the unfortunate boy to a momentary consciousness. He was barely able to turn his head towards Alice in recognition of their presence. A faint pleasure was expressed in his glassy eyes as he did so.

“Won’t you speak to me, Gerald? Won’t you speak to your own Alley?”

The boy shook with a convulsive shudder, but could not utter a syllable.

“Don’t die, dear Gerald; don’t leave poor Alley all alone in the world! Och, och, och!” said the little girl in the very agony of childish despair, “he’ll never be the same again—he’ll never speak to me again!”

The boy made an effort to bring Alice’s ear to his clammy lips; she strove to hear the almost inarticulate whisper which hovered upon them.

“Is—uncle James—here?” gasped the dying lad; “tell him—I—couldn’t—help it! Oh! Alley! oh!”

Gradually the groan, extorted by the last pang of dissolution, died away, and with it the spirit of poor Gerald Kavanagh.

Alice perceived what had happened as soon as any of the bystanders, but high and shrill her scream mounted over the wailing which arose from the others, ere she once more sank down in the swoon which the excess of her anguish had so mercifully caused.

On the following day a coroner’s inquest was held upon the bodies of the three sons of Peter Kavanagh, in a public-house not far distant from the scene of this fatal debauch. A surmise had been afloat that poison had somehow or other been the cause of their death, and an examination of one of the bodies was considered needful. I will not shock my readers with a description of the fearful chamber where this most loathsome operation was performed. The result was a verdict to the effect that the three Kavanaghs had died “from the excessive use of ardent spirits.”

I commenced by saying I feared that this narrative might fail in pointing a moral. It has a moral—a moral to selfish and ill-judging parents, and equally ill-judging societies, who lay the flattering unction to their souls that coercion will have a better effect than a fair and consistent example. Verily, the Spartan nobles, who exhibited the drunken slave before their children, and then placed the wine-cup within their reach, had a better knowledge of human nature than the Irish father who would exorcise the demon of alcohol out of his children by pledges of abstinence, or threats of punishment, while, in the security of his own experience, he feels he can temperately enjoy the luxury of spirituous drink.* R. M.

* From the Londonderry Standard.

SAP IN VEGETABLES.

SECOND AND CONCLUDING ARTICLE.

WE endeavoured in our last article to describe the principal circumstances of interest with respect to the ascending or un-elaborated sap. We have found that it is derived from the aliment which consists of water and carbonic acid; that it is composed of a solution of sugar and gum in water; that it ascends in the ordinary trees of this country through the wood, which is situated between the bark and pith; that the causes which elevate it are partly a vital attraction or suction exercised by the buds, and partly an endosmose, by which, in consequence of its superior density, it draws in its aliment through the spongy extremities of the roots; that its use is not only to furnish materials for the descending or elaborated sap, but by developing the fleshy part of plants to cause the growth of stems in length and roots in thickness. We shall now proceed to show the origin, the course, the composition, and the uses of the descending or elaborated sap.

The elaborated sap is formed out of the ascending sap. The place where this change takes place is in the leaves and green parts of vegetables; it is generally in the spring season that the ascending sap pushes out the buds into branches, and develops the little scales which had surrounded these organs into leaves; but when these leaves are formed, the sap continues to ascend into them, and there undergoes those alterations from whence the elaborated sap results. Now, these alterations consist in the getting rid of all superfluous water and carbonic acid, which, originally absorbed as aliment, had not undergone the conversion into gum and sugar during the ascent of the sap; secondly, in the acquisition of additional nutriment from the atmosphere; and, thirdly, in the conversion of these substances into a variety of new compounds.

Let us examine each of those changes to which the ascending sap is subjected, in succession; and, first, with respect to the disengagement of superfluous water and carbonic acid, every one must have observed drops of water collected on the leaves of cabbages and other vegetables, when examined early in the morning. These are commonly supposed to be dew-drops, but are truly in great part the result of a kind of perspiration which is always taking place from the surface of plants. That this is the case, can be proved by covering a cabbage-plant with a bell-glass, and placing it in a room sufficiently heated to prevent the deposition of dew, when drops of water will be found equally to collect upon its leaves. These drops are not observed during the day, because the temperature is then commonly so high as to evaporate them as fast as they are transuded; but the fact is, that plants actually give off much more water during the day than night. The escape of carbonic acid is not so easily detected as that of water; it can, however, be proved, through the resources of chemistry. Unlike water, which is liberated both night and day, and indeed in greatest quantity during the latter period of time, carbonic acid is found to be disengaged during the night only. As long as plants are exposed to the light of the sun, their green parts liberate none of this gas.

We have mentioned that when the ascending sap arrives into the leaves, it not only throws off superfluous water and carbonic acid, but likewise derives an additional quantity of nutriment from the atmosphere. The presence of light is necessary for this latter circumstance to take place. The nutriment which, under the influence of sunlight, it acquires from this source, is a substance named “carbon;” this substance is a constituent of carbonic acid, which is indeed composed of carbon and oxygen; carbonic acid is contained in the atmosphere in the proportion of one part in a thousand; the green parts of plants absorb it, and under the influence of light decompose it; the carbon is retained, but the oxygen is again liberated. We now may perceive the reason of the fact mentioned in the preceding paragraph: plants give out no carbonic acid during the day, because the superfluous carbonic acid of the ascending sap becomes decomposed under the influence of light, in the same way as that which has been absorbed from the atmosphere.

A great many compound products are obtained from the vegetable kingdom. We need merely recall to the reader’s recollection starch, resin, camphor, bland and aromatic oils, bitter principles, colouring matters, the acids of the grape, the lemon, and the apple, &c. to assure him of this truth. All these different substances form themselves out of the sugar and gum of the ascending sap, together with the carbon absorbed under the influence of light.

Fine connexions are apt to plunge you into a sea of extravagance, and then not to throw you a rope to save you from drowning.